

## Are You Ready To Go To Work?

Like many teens, you're probably thinking about what you want to do after graduation. Maybe you're wondering how to get the education and training you need to follow your own career pathway.

Many employers express concern about the lack of necessary employability skills for the nation's future workforce. That's why leaders who have studied the employability situation have identified eight targeted skill areas and, within each area, the competencies required for success. The eight areas are listed in the chart below.

### Workplace Readiness

#### Employability skill areas and competencies

Success in the workplace depends on education, on training in career-related skills and on "workplace readiness." Review this list of eight employability skill areas and their related competencies to help you become aware of workplace readiness skill areas.

#### 1.0 Communications

- a. Apply strategies to enhance effectiveness of all types of communications in the workplace
- b. Apply reading skills and strategies to work-related documents
- c. Locate information from books, journals, magazines and the Internet
- d. Apply basic writing skills to work-related communications
- e. Write work-related materials
- f. Use writing/publishing/presentation applications
- g. Apply basic skills for work-related oral communications
- h. Lead formal and informal group discussions
- i. Apply active listening skills to obtain and clarify information
- j. Communicate with others in a diverse workforce

#### 2.0 Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

- a. Define the problem
- b. Analyze the problem
- c. Search out reliable information related to the problem
- d. Formulate ideas, proposals and solutions to problems
- e. Select potential solutions based on reasoned criteria
- f. Implement solutions
- g. Evaluate solutions

#### 3.0 Information Technology Applications

- a. Determine use of technology in the workplace
- b. Use technology tools to access, manage, integrate and create information

#### 4.0 Systems

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of how business systems function with the economy
- b. Demonstrate an understanding of the

functions of systems in an organization (e.g., production, marketing, human resources and financial)

- c. Demonstrate principles of customer service
- e. Apply industry standards and practices to ensure quality work

#### 5.0 Safety, Health and Environment

- a. Demonstrate helpful attitudes about occupational safety and health
- b. Work in accordance with employee rights and responsibilities and employer obligations concerning occupational safety and health
- c. Access types and sources of workplace hazards
- d. Control hazards in the workplace
- e. Practice environmental conservation and safety

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**6.0 Leadership, Management and Teamwork**

- a. Demonstrate leadership skills
- b. Demonstrate citizenship skills through service projects
- c. Organize work activities
- d. Apply self-management techniques
- e. Apply group process techniques
- f. Perform work tasks in a team

**7.0 Ethics and/or Legal Responsibilities**

- a. Apply ethical standards of the industry to workplace conduct
- b. Demonstrate respect for diversity in the workplace
- c. Perform responsibilities within legal guidelines

**8.0 Employability and/or Career Development**

- a. Develop a career plan with alternatives

- b. Apply job search skills to seek, evaluate, apply for, and accept employment
- c. Demonstrate employability skills needed to get and keep a job
- d. Demonstrate positive work behaviors
- e. Access alternative occupational choices (e.g., working conditions, benefits and opportunities to change)

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In each Career Cluster section of your *Idaho Career Planning Guide*, you will find a list of pathways related to the cluster and several occupations you will find in those pathways.

1. Look at the results of your interest inventory on page 5 of the guide.
2. Review the job titles listed in the cluster pathways that relate to your interests.
3. Review the eight targeted employability skill areas and their competencies listed below.
4. Identify a competency that would be required in a pathway of your choice.
5. Describe the consequences if the competency is not practiced.

No matter what job you choose, individuals with workplace readiness skills are in demand. Take a closer look at some of the abilities and personal characteristics needed in the work world by completing the sample test from the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI).

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## Sample NOCTI Workplace Readiness Test Item

### 1. Communications

Effective speaking includes

- a. being polite and factual
- b. being loud and emotional
- c. saying what people want to hear
- d. not provoking criticism

### 2. Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

What is the ending balance in this check register?

11/3	Beginning balance	\$ 238.10
11/3	Check #152	23.90
11/4	Deposit	476.16
11/5	Check #153	157.43
11/6	Check #154	245.55
11/6	ATM withdrawal	51.50
11/7	ATM deposit	162.37
11/8	Check #155	34.21

- a. \$467.04   b. \$364.04   c. \$373.04   d. \$355.04

### 3. Information Technology Applications

To avoid losing documents or data you have created on a computer, it is a good idea to

- a. send your files by e-mail to a trusted friend
- b. globalize your records
- c. back up your files
- d. copyright your records

### 4. Safety, Health and Environment

When lifting, you should

- a. never let your shoulders go below your waist
- b. keep feet together
- c. use arm muscles only, not your back
- d. never bend your knees

### 5. Systems

What is the cost to the company when one or more employees are often absent?

- a. It is no big deal since co-workers will cover.
- b. Customers are lost due to lack of service.
- c. Co-workers complain in the break room.
- d. There will be an increase in Workers' Compensation costs.

### 6. Leadership, Management and Teamwork

Constructive criticism is important because it

- a. tells a person how to improve
- b. tells a person what he/she did wrong
- c. identifies the person who made a mistake
- d. builds power in a leader

### 7. Ethics and Legal Responsibilities

A law that protects the rights of people with conditions such as blindness is the

- a. National Labor Relations Act of 1935
- b. Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993
- c. Civil Rights Act of 1964
- d. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

### 8. Employability/Career Development

To prepare for a job interview, you should

- a. shower, use deodorant and be sure to use plenty of perfume or cologne
- b. make sure hair is clean and combed, fingernails trimmed
- c. wear conservative and appropriate clothes
- d. both B and C

Employability skills can be learned with practice. You will need these skills to further your education and find a job.